



# The Lowell Volunteer Partner

Issue No. 9 • Winter, 2008

Lowell National Historical Park

## A Fond Farewell to Mike Wurm...

The voice and face of Lowell National Historical Park's successful Volunteer-in-Parks program for the past nine years has been Volunteer Coordinator, Mike Wurm. Where Mike is retiring in the new year, we wanted to capture a few grateful insights into his career with the National Park Service in Lowell. Mike's passion for the Volunteer Program and the VIP's at the Park may cause some to believe that this is the only official position Mike has held. In actuality, there were several positions that led Mike to his expansive knowledge of the people and culture of this city. Park Ranger, Exhibit Specialist, Visitor Center Supervisor are among the titles he's shouldered before becoming the Volunteer Coordinator.

The flourishing volunteer program Mike has assembled is one in which many take pride! The recognition of the program as the Northeast Region "Volunteer Program of the Year" in 2007 and the Lowell Canalwaters Cleaners as the national "Volunteer Group of the Year" in 2006 are telling statements of his accomplishments. The growth of canal and environmental stewardship opportunities throughout the city are a testament to his commitment.

On planning his retirement, Mike pressed to understand the future of the program under new leadership and was charged with beginning to craft a vision for what that future could be. An appreciation of Mike's impact in

the community is illustrated by the turnout at recent meetings to consider the Park and community's connections through volunteers. A conference room full of current VIP's worked alongside representatives from many local cultural organizations to ponder that question. A subcommittee has continued that conversation and Mike will be presenting that to Park management shortly. As the Park staff and volunteers continue to celebrate this, the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Park's establishment, we look forward to creative options that will blend the park's objectives with our continuing role in the community.

An inquiry about what's next for Mike led to the statement, "I'm an idealist and a romantic," as he explained plans for a trip to warmer climes shortly after retiring. Arizona and Baja, California were among the locales on his list. That sounds good and warm! Lowell National Historical Park says farewell to Mike Wurm as he retires after 40 years of government service. Our appreciation for his contributions is heartfelt and the engaging program and personalities will continue as a legacy illustrating the Park's dedication to volunteerism along with Mike's skill in establishing relationships that will persist in the coming years.

*Michael Creasey, Superintendent*



## Volunteer Park Rangers in Interpretation



VIP Fred Forster



VIP Mike Gaulin



VIP Bill & Barbara Rawnsley



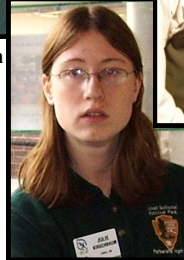
VIP Emily Levine



VIP Victor Balala



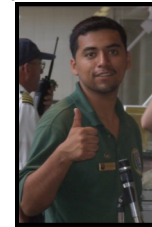
VIP Andy Pearson



VIP Julie Kirschbaum



VIP John Balco



VIP Luis Rodriguez

## Interpretation Volunteers Fit the Bill in 2008

by Jim Roberts

The Interpretation Division of Lowell National Historical Park benefited by over 4,000 volunteer hours in 2008. Volunteer Park Rangers assisted the park in meeting its mission by staffing sites, providing information and orientation to park visitors at all of the park sites, and conducting roving interpretation and formal guided tours.

The volunteer staff came from a variety of backgrounds and brought with them a diverse array of skills and abilities. Cambodian, Nigerian, Haitian, Irish, Portuguese, Greek, French Canadian, Trinidadian, Peruvian, and American adult, student, and senior volunteers brought flavor and fun to the park in 2008.

UMass Lowell provided the division with five outstanding work study students through the Federal Student Employment Program. **Jennita Peou, Luis Rodriguez, Anna Thomas, Matt Popores, and Channara Phaik** not only helped staff the park, but also represented the face of the community and the university. VIPs **Allishah Mohammed and Al Lefebvre**, although not work study, are currently enrolled at UMass Lowell as well.

Other schools and colleges represented by volunteer staff were: **Mike Stewart** from Villanova, **Peter Ridgers** from Colby-Sawyer, **Francesca Desiré, Catherine Njaaga and Victor Balala** from Middlesex Community College, **Leslie Hitch** from Northeastern University and **Kei Yun Wong** from Harvard University.

Three volunteer rangers came directly from the city of Lowell, having lived here all their lives: **Krystal Vezina, Al Lefebvre, and Julie Kirschbaum**. Operation A.B.L.E., a Senior Community Service Employment Program, provided the park with **Charlotte Ciaraldi** as well as much needed assistance in the Eastern National Bookstore with Josephine Sullivan. Lowell's Community Teamwork Inc. Senior Corps continues to assist us with staffing the Visitor Center with **Lee Knust**.

Another sterling volunteer stewardship effort by a group that goes back about twenty years is the **Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society** volunteer work group under Jim Nigzus, Jr. Every year, they are there on their scheduled maintenance Saturdays doing tough jobs such as painting the locomotive and replacing the siding on the railcar. They are the park's first volunteer stewardship group, but they remain relatively unsung, which is a shame. Without them, the railroad site along Dutton St. might be looking pretty tattered instead of being the popular visitor photo site that it is; they also educate visitors about the great importance of the railroads to the urban and industrial development of Lowell.



Jim Nigzus, Jr.



Fred Brown

VIPs **John Balco, Mike Capozzi, Barry Green, Hank Knoblock, John Hassan, Diane Novelli, Kristen Murphy, Cherrie Swann, Emily Levine, Andy Pearson, Louise Sweet, Mike Gaulin, Riyadh Mohammed**, all contributed to the success of the interpretive programs at Lowell National Historical Park. We could not have offered the variety of programs and services, not to mention keeping interpretive sites open, without their generous assistance and support.

**Bill and Barbara Rawnsley** returned to their "Summer Cottage by the Water" to once again staff the Moody Street Feeder Gatehouse & Information Center on Merrimack Street each weekend during the summer months with the Adopt-A-Gatehouse Program. Not only did Bill & Barbara consistently open and maintain the exhibit site, they also trained younger staff to fill in for them so they could take a well deserved week-end off.

VIP and journalist **Fred Forster** researched and wrote three Visitor use site bulletins on early Lowell investors Patrick Jackson, Nathan Appleton, and Abbott Lawrence for distribution in the park and for posting on the park's website which will continue to assist students for years to come. He is currently working on another on Lowell mill owner, lawyer, and Civil War General Benjamin Butler.

VIP and retired teacher **John Hassan** scanned hundreds of historical images and researched and conducted two PowerPoint presentations on Lowell History to park visitors.

It is often said that volunteers should never replace paid staff in the national parks. During the winter months when paid staff is at its lowest level, there are days when all interpretive sites are staffed by volunteers. This allows permanent ranger staff to work on other projects and long-range planning. The contributions made by volunteers to the division in 2008 cannot be overstated. Many thanks go out to all. The volunteers keep us going! Here's hoping that 2009 will be equally successful!



## Volunteer Spotlights



**Krystal Vezina** is from Lowell. Krystal's family immigrated to Lowell from Quebec and Madeira in 1920 and have been here ever since. Krystal's family worked in the mills.

Krystal is a SCA intern and her interests are anthropology, history, reading, knitting, and sewing.

Krystal has been volunteering at LNHP Since the summer of 2007.

Krystal became a volunteer because It sounded like fun and she thought it would look good on her resume.

One of Krystal's fondest memories is

going to Lowell High School and rowing on the river.

**Luis Rodriguez** Moved to the USA by himself from Peru. He is currently a student of Engineering at UMASS Lowell.

Luis is a work study student who has volunteered with LNHP for 6 months. He enjoys everything about volunteering



**Alan Lefebvre** is from Lowell and has 5 sisters, 2 brothers nieces & nephews. Alan is a Student at UMASS and is majoring in History. Alan is also interested in sports and music.

Alan became a volunteer to learn more about Lowell and to give back to the community. He enjoys meeting and interacting with the visitors. One thing that Alan would like to do is giving tours.



**Amelia Hewner** is from Ransomville, NY. She is an Intern with the Administrative & Curatorial Depts.

Amelia said that her favorite thing about volunteering was that "The people were wonderful to work with and they gave me so much responsibility it was exciting and interesting everyday."

Amelia liked that she was given the opportunity to be creative in her job this summer.

Amelia attends Juniata College in Central PA and is majoring in Accounting and Museum. She hopes to work in a museum somewhere in the administrative department. Amelia started off as an intern and in late June was hired on as a seasonal employee for the rest of the summer.



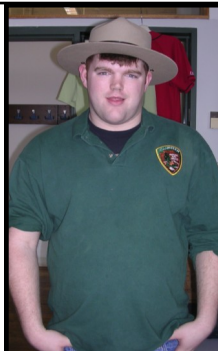
**Michael Stewart** is from Andover, MA. His family is Irish and he has 2 sisters (1 older, 1 younger). Michael works for ESped where he enters information such as IEP's for schools. Michael's interests include scouting where he made Eagle Scout at 17 years old and basketball.

Michael is a History Major and an Economic Minor at Villa-

nova University in PA. He did an internship with LNHP so that he would be exposed to area's relevant to his history major. Michael liked the opportunity to interact with visitors and be surrounded by history. Michael has always wanted to travel in Europe and experience history first hand. This fall he will be doing just that by studying abroad in Galway, Ireland.



The curatorial department has had a growing volunteer family throughout the past year, including longtime volunteers **Jeanette Dose** and **Clee Ace** (sitting, left-to-right) and this fall's German graduate student intern, **Britta Bzyl** (standing, far right). Staff members Jack Herlihy, David Blackburn, and Chris Wirth (standing, left-to-right) have been very welcoming and appreciative of the work done by volunteers. This photo was taken during the last week of Britta's internship. Britta assisted Chris with a community exhibit project. She hopes that her internship, which included everything from observing Tsongas Industrial History Center school programs to Lowell Celebrates Kerouac events, and her strong interest in Lowell's role in the history of industrialization will lead to a Ph.D. research back home. Britta's engaging personality and enthusiastic appreciation of Lowell's history helped make all of us feel good about the work we do at the park.



Work Experience Program students of the Greater Lowell Technical High School continued internships with the park this year. Both **Tommy Gravel** (left) and **Travis Hibbert** fantasized about being park rangers while being a big help in janitorial for the Maintenance Division in the Boott Cotton Mills Museum in the spring. The interns work every other week for the park with the other week in their classrooms.





## Spindle City Corps Expands Greatly by Amy Glowacki



This summer Lowell NHP expanded its youth offerings under the **Spindle City Corps** umbrella to include the traditional SCC teams that worked with maintenance to assist with backlogged projects and the new Youth Theater Program team that presented costumed programs throughout the Park.

Working in partnership with Community Teamwork, Inc. and with additional monies provided by a National Parks Volunteer In Parks grant the traditional Spindle City Corps teams of 11 youths and two team leaders, all dressed in the recognizable goldenrod t-shirts, painted fence along Dutton Street, filled four hundred sand bags and assisted with set up for the Lowell Folk Festival. The teams became stewards of a section of the Western Canal, cutting the lawn, removing trash and

planting flowers. The teams hosted youth teams from Boston African American NHS and Groundwork Lawrence who assisted the Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust with a cleanup along the Concord River Greenway. They participated in work projects at Cape Cod NS and Marsh Billings Rockefeller NP that included overnight camping trips. The teams regularly cleaned the River Transformed Exhibit and the Pawtucket Gatehouse. They also learned about the National Park Service mission while exploring Lowell NHP visiting the sites and participating in the MAPP program. The program kicked off at Thompson Island with team building exercises in the Outward Bound Leadership Program and culminated at the Youth Summit held in Lowell August 16th.



The successful pilot **Spindle City Corps Youth Summer Theater Program** was funded through a Youth Partnership Program Grant. The group of 10 Lowell High students and their teacher Marianne Corcoran and the NPS costume assistant Ellen Frost they performed informal and formal presentations throughout the Park and city during the month of July. Participants wore historic costumes as they roamed the streets stopping by the Trolley, the Mill Girls and Immigrants Exhibit, the

Boott Cotton Mills Museum and interacted with visitors as first person characters including Kirk Boott, Lucy Larcom and Harriet Hanson Robinson. The students entertained visitors after the Children's Series program of the Lowell Summer Music Series, before a LSMS evening concert, and roamed the crowd at the Lowell Folk Festival. The students attended a Marcia Seabrook historical character performance and visited Old Sturbridge Village to prepare for the summer.



### GATEHOUSE STEWARDS

The dynamic volunteer duo of **Bill and Barbara Rawnsley** have succeeded greatly in six years of stewardship of the Moody St. Feeder Gatehouse in dramatically upgrading the maintenance of that resource, as well as giving visitors tours of it and telling its story as a significant gem of the canal system. The Rawnsleys have become the conscience of the gatehouse, while Bill has become the voice of the Lowell story, not just how the gatehouse worked but also "the rest of the story." Their work is unprecedented in the park and without them; the gatehouse would undoubtedly have remained closed to the public for years more.



### Lowell High School Mail Group

Dear Amy:

November 23, 2008

From the boy's group in the Life Skills class and Mr. Rapone We would like to say thank you for our hat's. We will wear them proudly and with pride. It is a wonderful experience for the boy's to do the mail run and very enjoyable.

Thank You,  
The Boys





## Lowell Canalwaters Cleaners

### Trashy Volunteers

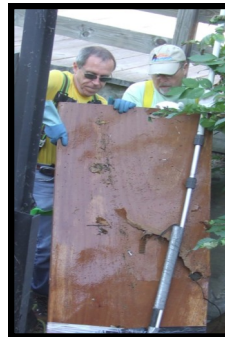
The trashy volunteers of the Canalwaters Cleaners achieved even more visible success this year as evidenced by the canals themselves: they are much cleaner and are staying clean for longer. Although the piles of trash in the canals have been reduced in scope, the scheduled clean-ups running from Earth Day in April to Make-a-Difference Day in October were necessary to keep whacking at the issue and to show that these volunteers take great pride in the canals. It is a can-do spirit that is infectious to the community as a whole, leading to volunteer efforts from the Acre, Lowell High School, and Lowell House, among others. Thanks to Bill Moreau and his activist apostles for continuing to work hard toward clean canals.



Great American Clean-up May 3, 2008 Lowell High School Students



Make a Difference Day October 27, 2007



Canal Clean-up August 23, 2008



Canal Clean-up July 19, 2008



Stewardship Saturday Canal Clean-up on October 11, 2008; approximately 30 Students from Lowell High came out to volunteer.



Earth Day April 26, 2008

### National Grid Earth Day Clean-up May 2, 2008





## Greenhouse Guerillas



**Middlesex Community College** cancelled classes on October 17, 2008 so that students and faculty could participate in their first annual Day of Service. MCC had students and faculty volunteer at approximately 55 sites in the surrounding areas of the Lowell & Bedford Campus'. There were approximately 30-35 students and faculty that were at the LNHP site. These volunteers cleaned up debris and planted along the Prescott Street Walkway and cleaned up Kerouac Park. It was great to hear the students say that they felt fulfilled when they finished their project.

The volunteers of the **Keep Lowell Beautiful-Community Gardens Greenhouse** continue to multiply grass-roots gardening and hands-on environmental community service throughout the city, including along the Canalways and in the Acre. The park nominated the greenhouse guerrillas for the National Park Service volunteer group of the year award, but was nosed out by another national park. This group under the past and current leadership of Janice Pokorski and Deb Harding deserves mega-recognition for the incredible "Flowering City" spirit they have demonstrated in revitalizing one forgotten landscape plot after another.



Maintenance volunteer coordinators Sheila Carman and Deb Harding moved into brand new jobs with each working 2-3 days per week this summer and early fall. Not only did they help integrate the Community Gardens Greenhouse into the park, but their work with youth groups, special groups, and Stewardship Saturdays created so many more community service involvements and meaningful experiences for park-community relations than we would have had otherwise.



**Motorola** came out on October 15, 2008 for their annual Day of Service. Approximately 30 volunteers cleaned up debris and trimmed trees behind the Tsongas Arena, they planted a garlic bed, got the greenhouse ready for winter and painted.





## Accessible Garden

One of the truly special community gardens of Lowell was created over the past two years at the Mack Plaza next to Shattuck and Market Streets. The Lowell Commission on Disabilities worked with the Community Gardens Greenhouse volunteer group to create the garden consisting of raised beds, which can be worked on more easily by volunteers using wheelchairs. It was “dedicated to the residents of Lowell” by the commission led by Elizabeth Cannon and Mayor Bud Caulfield.



Ron Lassman & Mayor Bud Caulfield



## Lowell High School Gears Up for Clean Canals

On April 17, Headmaster William Samaras and Teachers James Callahan, Katie Keefe, and Geoff McDonough along with a contingent of students accepted a donation of canalway and landscape cleaning tools from Executive Director Bill Moreau of Lowell Canalwaters Cleaners in partnership with Lowell National Historical Park. The Public Service and Civic Engagement Academy along with the Environmental Club have agreed to be the Adopt-a-Canalway Stewards for this area along the Merrimack Canal. The students and teachers in these programs volunteer their time in using this equipment for the maintenance of the area.

Moreau said that the equipment, including specialized long pole nets, rakes, litter

-grabbers, and much more, was funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Environmental Trust. National Park Volunteer Coordinator Mike Wurm and Moreau told the school contingent how much they appreciate this initiative on their part to provide stewardship for the Merrimack Canal, which runs right through the middle of their campus, as well as the greenways on both sides of the canal.

Shown in the photo are left-to-right: Headmaster William Samaras, Jim Callahan (Teacher), Bill Moreau of LCC, Geraldine Lantigua, Shawnic Coleman, Kate Keefe (Teacher), Jonathan Geary, Jr., Tim Callery, Geoff McDonough (Teacher), and Mike Wurm of LNHP.



Lowell High School Stewardship

## ROLL OUT THE BARRELS!



In an effort led by **Janice Pokorski of Keep Lowell Beautiful-Community Gardens Greenhouse**, volunteers from the Lowell House creatively painted new trash barrels and placed them along the Western Canalway next to their building. Six brightly designed barrels with the Keep Lowell Beautiful logo sprouted along both sides of the canal between Merrimack and Moody Streets. These barrels replaced the unwieldy concrete barrels with their overflowing trash in an effort to stem the flow of litter into the canal. The volun-

teers also help empty the barrels every week in cooperation with the city.

The colorful barrels most definitely brighten the canal walkway and assert a positive view of the Lowell House volunteers toward taking care of the canal and the environment, as well as conducting healthier lives.





## CONGRATULATIONS ON A FANTASTIC FOLK FESTIVAL By Michael Creasey, LNHP Superintendent



The Lowell Folk Festival was another smashing success this summer, thanks considerably to the essential support of over 1400 volunteers contributing over 22,000 hours of their time and energy over the last weekend of July. The success of the festival relies tremendously on volunteers for all aspects from donation collections, souvenir sales, performer and stage support, and recycling to the multi-cultural array of ethnic food booths sponsored by community organizations.

I would especially like to spotlight the leadership and work done by Barry Pearson and Enterprise Bank in organizing the Bucket Brigade donation that covered the stages and downtown

event areas collecting donations from happy festival-goers, which is necessary for keeping this grand event free for visitors into the foreseeable future. In addition, I want to salute: Pat Scanlon for organizing his recycling volunteers in making this event one of the greenest in the country; Pauline Golec for organizing the volunteer community organizations that produce the irresistible ethnic foods; Art Sutcliffe and the Lowell Festival Foundation volunteers who do so much year-round in ensuring the festival lifts off as planned every year; and so many more too numerous to mention here.



Ben's Memorial

## REMEMBERING BEN PROKUSKI



Rick Randall & Ben Prokuski in Boott Cotton Mills Museum Weave Room

Ben Prokuski, NPS Northeast Region Volunteer of the Year for 2002, is now remembered with a new memorial plaque at the Tsongas Industrial History Center on the third floor of the Boott Cotton Mills Museum. In November, Weave Room Manager Rick Randall, Museum Education Supervisor Bev Perna, and Mike Wurm hung the plaque near the warping machine that Ben built for the Tsongas Center. They shared many great stories of Ben, the hard-driving, crusty yet lovable, master textile man, who had spent his career and retirement years in the textile industry and then in improving the machine exhibits of area museums such as the Boott, American Textile History Museum, and Manchester's Millyard Museum. The plaque states:

**BRONISLAW "BEN" PROKUSKI  
DEDICATED VOLUNTEER AND MILL MAN  
1911-2006**

After a long career in the textile industry, Ben gave his retirement years as a textile mechanic volunteer to Lowell National Historical Park and other museums. Thanks to Ben, the thousands of students touring the park and Tsongas Industrial History Center have a more authentic learning experience about the mills of the Merrimack Valley.



## PAUL MUELLER Sends Best Wishes from California!



Paul and a Trolley Full of Volunteer Friends

Lowell reminders are everywhere here but of course it is not the same. Just yesterday the refuge volunteer office coordinated a holiday party for staff and volunteers causing me to work a rare Sunday. Stopping by at the Native Plants Greenhouse gave me déjà vu this morning. If only there could be a way to stitch places together: walk in the greenhouse here and come out at the maintenance yard in Lowell. (The greenhouse in Fremont, CA is also in a maintenance yard.)

Getting to my office cubicle, I find my two cans of New England beans and a can of Boston bread (from the Rawnsleys) prominently on top of a file cabinet. There is also a hand

painted sign from the Lowell Community Gardens Greenhouse that simply says "GROW" next to my desktop. The cap that I wore today wasn't the uniform one. It has Canalwaters Cleaners emblazoned on it. It upset me when a bit of food got on the hat, but it came off. Keeping this hat in good shape is important to me.

It became time to get my camera ready for the Holiday Party here. How many of you have not seen me with a camera taking pictures of a volunteer event? These new pictures will go into the file with all of the old ones. Taking a peak at the folder on my computer for the "Lowell Folk Festival 2007" brings the music

and the people back again. Ray Houde has great photos here. There you are again - all of you. There are the people that I would see only during the festival and would look forward to seeing them each year when the festival came around again.

You might be wondering how I'm doing. I am doing fine. Thank you. Was there something left undone back in Lowell? Mike's letting me get a word in again is a great opportunity to really thank you for good times and good memories. To all of the volunteers and employees at Lowell NHP I wish you a great holiday season and a wonderful new year!



Cheryl Kim & Deb Harding



Volunteer Office Team Celebration.: Cheryl Kim, Kathy Caulfield & Theresa Wamala with J.R. & Mike.



Jim Roberts & Theresa Wamala

### More Thanks from Mike

I need also to thank deeply the folks who made possible the great successes of this year in the volunteer office:

Paul Mueller as Assistant Volunteer Coordinator was my partner until he rode off toward his own sunset, a promotion/transfer to California in late May. He cared deeply that all you volunteers had good experiences at the park and were recognized for it. Practically speaking, his contributions were great in organizing the database and producing newsletters and webpages, among many other things.

Jim Roberts stepped in to provide leadership through Folk Festival and early fall, while continuing to coordinate the large group of volunteers and interns in Interpretation; Jim was a positive spirit in working with our team and accomplishing the most successful Folk Festival volunteer operation yet for our office.

Summer UML work-study Cheryl Kim; at first, in late May and June, Cheryl was the sole replacement for Paul Mueller; with her little bit of training from Paul, she quickly mastered the

database and being the front line contact for volunteers. I am especially grateful for her stepping up to do the scheduling of volunteers, as well as many other tasks for the Folk Festival. She was completely dedicated and worked on her own without any handholding from me. Cheryl was a complete gift.

In the second half of the summer, UML work-study Theresa Wamala brought the experience she gained from summer 2007 back to our office and was quietly helpful on the various tasks we asked her to do, a very calming presence as pre-festival stress began to grow and during the event itself.

Seasonal park ranger Kathy Caulfield who stayed on through the fall did everything we asked her to do as well, including taking advantage of her cake-baking creativity! She photographed and produced text highlighting our volunteers and events, and was another calming presence in our operation before and during the festival. During the fall, she became the volunteer office assistant, showing great database skills, interpersonal skills with volunteers, and a talent for newsletter production.

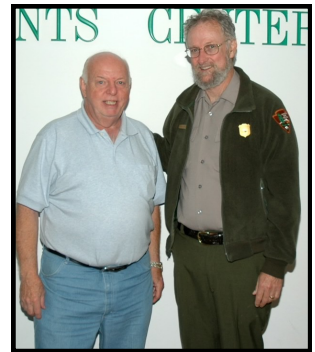
## 2008: The Biggest Volunteer Year Yet at Lowell NHP!!!



Connie Moreau and Ron Cannistraro



Motorola



VIP Ray Houde & Mike Wurm

Approximately 2500 volunteers donated more than 116,000 hours to Lowell National Historical Park in Fiscal Year 2008, an increase of 20,000 hours over last year, making this the largest annual total ever for the park. The park's partnership with the Keep Lowell Beautiful-Community Gardens Greenhouse resulted in the expansion of gardening in park spaces, thanks to 240 volunteers giving over 7000 hours. The park's other major volunteer environmental partnership with the Lowell Canalwaters Cleaners also added significantly to the clean-up of the canals. They held 9 clean-up events with over 350 volunteers giving over 10,000 hours for a cleaner landscape. The Lowell Folk Festival, enlisted over 1300 volunteers contributing nearly 25,000 hours. The park's major youth partnership, Spindle City Corps, expanded to include a special Western Canal stewardship effort with centennial funding. The program's 32 youths and young adults gave over 6000 hours. Volunteers in park operations—Interpretation, Curatorial, Trolleys, Administration, and Maintenance—had their

biggest year ever: nearly 100 volunteers and interns gave nearly 14,000 hours. Finally, two of our biggest partnerships, the Tson-gas Industrial History Center and Lowell Summer Music Series, contributed nearly 36,000 hours and over 7000 hours respectively. Centennial funding was important in creating seasonal volunteer coordinator positions that played a big role in program growth. BUT THE BIGGEST THING OF ALL WAS THE VOLUNTEER-ADDED PASSION FOR DOING A GREAT JOB, WHETHER IT WAS TRASH REMOVAL, PLANTING FLOWERS, RECORDING THE MUSIC AT THE FOLK FESTIVAL, OR HELPING VISITORS UNDERSTAND WHY LOWELL BECAME THE FIRST SIGNIFICANT AND SUCCESSFUL INDUSTRIAL CITY OF AMERICA!!! Sincerely, it's been an absolute gift for me to experience your commitment to community service and for the park to benefit from your selfless devotion to helping out.



Bob Gagnon, Carol Drapeau, and Jack Moynihan



VIP John Petillo, Mike and J.R.



Rita Annainan and Jim Roberts

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## The Future of the Park Volunteer Office: Who is replacing Mike?

Yes, Mike's last day on Uncle Sam's payroll is January 3, so what happens then with the park volunteer program? Jim Roberts will be on a 120-day detail starting then in the volunteer coordinator position, running the volunteer office from his new digs at the Visitor Center. JR is aiming for a Visitor Center desk operation that will be staffed mainly by volunteers in 2009, at least until the summer ranger staff can be hired. He is also creating volunteer office work spaces, while the current volunteer office in the Boott will be occupied by interpretive rangers on the permanent staff. So, drop by to see JR in 2009 and consider how else you can help volunteering during the year. JR is planning special volunteer training as a special initiative and will also be supporting all aspects of the volunteer program, including the partner volunteer groups and volunteer events such as Earth Day and canal clean-ups. Please give him your support!!!





**Deb Harding**



**Canalwaters Cleaners Award**

## ADIOS, AMIGOS!

It's time for me as an NPS career employee to ride off into the sunset over the Merrimack, and collect many other sunsets over many other waters and mountains. I would love to go to part-time status (mostly to avoid the wintry months) and continue working with the volunteer program, but the federal government does not allow for that, so I will be retiring on January 1 after 40-plus years with the government, including the first five in the Air Force and the last 26 right here at Lowell NHP. It's been a great ride for me, but now it is time to ride off into that proverbial sunset: to renew acquaintances with friends and the American road and national parks (might pick up a volunteer gig at one of these) and finally to encounter Arkansas, my last state, all in the early months of 2009. But I will return home and hope at least to stay involved in an advisory way and as a volunteer myself, so I won't quite be completely gone. After nine years as the park volunteer coordinator, I can't go "cold turkey" from our volunteer family.

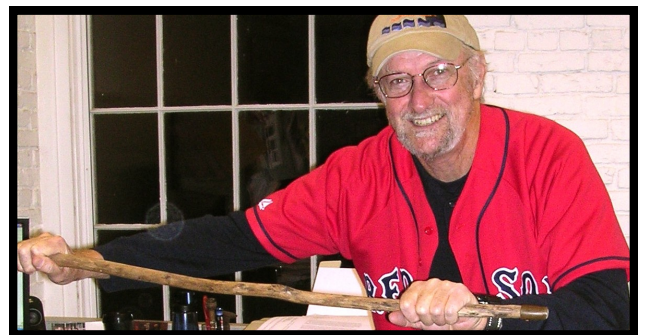
In hindsight, this past year may have been the best yet of my nine years with the volunteer program; it was certainly the largest as we established a new record for volunteer hours with approximately 116,000! But it is the quality of the volunteer achievements that we all should be the most proud of. Other articles in this newsletter will deal with the huge expansion of "volunteer park rangers" under the leadership of Jim Roberts filling the schedule slots in Interpretation as permanent staff keeps whittling down, the growing volunteer youth programs under Amy Glowacki led by Spindle City Corps, and other impressive commitments. (See "More Thanks from Mike" on previous page.)



Mike's future retirement as John Muir impersonator, thanks to Rick Randall for the idea!



**Bill Moreau & Mike Wurm**



**An invitation...** Come by to share a beverage, a Moxie, a root beer, a Guinness, a Pabst, or whatever, I will be "holding court" at the Old Worthen on the Fridays of December 19 and January 2, starting at 3:00. More practice for the historic pub tours that I will be leading as a Lowell Celebrates Kerouac volunteer!

*Mike*